

Message Text

SECRET

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60/42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 071256Z NOV 75
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6550
INFO AMEMBASUY BERLIN
USMISSION NATO
USDEL MBFR VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 16085

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 5)

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, UR

SUBJECT: THE KHLESTOV REMARKS - A "SIGNAL"?

REF: A. MBFR 0496; B. MOSCOW 12392; C. MOSCOW 14314;
D. MOSCOW 13949; E. MOSCOW 0743; F. MBFR 0394

1. SUMMARY. THE UNUSUAL OPENNESS KHLESTOV DISPLAYED IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH DEAN OCTOBER 22 LEADS US TO SPECULATE THAT MOSCOW IS ENCOURAGING HIM TO BEGIN EXPLORATION OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE REPLIES BY THE WARSAW PACT TO OPTION 111. IF THIS IS INDEED THE CASE, WE ASSUME THAT THIS SOVIET MOVE INDICATED THAT (1) THEY HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE OPTION 111 SERIOUSLY AS A BASIS FOR NEOGTIATIONS; AND (2) THAT THEY HAVE SUCCEDED IN LINING UP THEIR EASTERN EUROPEAN ALLIES -- INCLUDING A BALKY GDR---IN SUPPORT OF WHATEVER NEGOTIATING PROGRAM THEY HAVE IN MIND. WE ALSO DISCUSS THE NATURE OF THE APPARENT SOVIET-GDR DISAGREEMENT ON MBFR, AND SPECULATE THAT THE RECENT TOUGH LINE THE GDR HAS BEEN PURSUING ON EUROPEAN SECURITY MAY BE TIED TO CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBLE

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POLITICAL IMPACT OF ALL SOVIET FORCE REDUCTIONS UNDER

AN MBFR AGREEMENT TAKING PLACE FROM ITS SOIL. END
SUMMARY.

2. KHLESTOV'S REMARKS REPORTED REFTEL A INTEREST US AS MUCH FOR THEIR TONE AS FOR SUBSTANCE. IN OUR BRIEF ENCOUNTERS WITH KHLESTOV WE HAVE FOUND HIM TO BE RELATIVELY OUTGOING ON A PERSONAL BASIS, BUT EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS WHEN IT CAME TO DISCUSSING POSSIBLE FLEXIBILITY IN THE WARSAW PACT APPROACH TO MBFR. WHILE THE PARTICULAR QUESTIONS OF SUBSTANCE HE CHOSE TO COMMENT ON MAY INDEED REFLECT HIS PERSONAL APPRAISAL OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, WE FIND OURSELVES DOUBTING THAT HE WOULD HAVE SPOKEN SO OPENLY IF HE HAD NOT BEEN PROMPTED TO DO SO BY MOSCOW. FURTHER, WE SUGGEST THAT THIS "SIGNAL" BY KHLESTOV MAY WELL HAVE INTERESTING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WARSAW PACT POSITIONS ON MBFR.

3. AS WE SUGGESTED IN REF B, WE ASSUME THAT MOSCOW REALIZES THAT OPTION 111 WILL BE THE LAST MAJOR WESTERN PROPOSAL FOR SOME TIME, AND PERHAPS THE MOST FORTHCOMING ONE THEY WILL SEE FOR A GOOD MANY YEARS. IF THIS INDEED IS THEIR PERCEPTION, THEY MUST REALIZE THAT ANY HOPE FOR SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE MUST REST ON WARSAW PACT ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL AS A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION, AND FAIRLY BRISK NEGOTIATION AT THAT. WE SUGGEST--AT THE SAME TIME EMPHASIZING THE SPECULATIVE NATURE OF THIS SUGGESTION --THAT KHLESTOV'S VOYAGE OF EXPLORATION MIGHT INDICATE THAT MOSCOW HAS MADE THE DECISION TO ACCEPT OPTION 111 AS THE BASIS ON WHICH TO MOVE THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD AND IS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF DETERMINING HOW THAT MIGHT BEST BE DONE.

4. AS WE HAVE REPORTED IN REF D, THERE HAVE BEEN SCATTERED INDICATIONS THAT MOSCOW IN RECENT WEEKS HAS BEEN DISCUSSING ITS MBFR POSITION WITH ITS ALLIES IN WARSAW, PRAGUE, AND EAST BERLIN. WE ASSUME THAT THESE DISCUSSIONS DEALT WITH POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE SOVIET NEGOTIATING POSITION, MOST LIKELY THOSE WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE MADE IN ORDER TO REPLY TO OPTION 111.

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WE UNDERSTAND EMBASSY WARSAW'S REPORTING TO INDICATED, AS DOES OUR OWN KNOWLEDGE OF THE POLISH POSITION ON THE MATTER, THAT THE POLES ARE INTERESTED IN AN MBFR AGREEMENT AS LONG AS IT CONTAINS RESTRAINTS ON THE BUNDESWEHR; AND GIEREK'S RECENT FAVORABLE NOISES ON MBFR INDICATED THAT HE IS PROBABLY NOT GIVING THE SOVIETS ANY DIFFICULTIES ON PREPARING AN OPTION 111 REPLY. PRAGUE, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, MAY NOT BE QUITE AS

UNAMBIGUOUSLY IN FAVOR OF AN MBFR AGREEMENT; BUT GROMYKO'S VISIT THERE IN LATE SEPTEMBER, JUDGING FROM THE COMMUNIQUE, SEEMED TO HAVE PAVED THE WAY FOR CZECH APPROVAL FOR WHATEVER LINE HE WAS PUSHING ON THE ISSUE. HIS STOP IN EAST BERLIN AFTER THE VISIT IN PRAGUE, HOWEVER, PRODUCED A COMMUNIQUE ENTIRELY DEVOID OF ANY MENTION OF MBFR--A SEEMING INDICATION THAT THE GDR WAS BALKING. INDEED, THE HARD LINE BEING PUSHED BY HONECKER AND HIS COLLEAGUES IN RECENT MONTHS ON THE QUESTION OF EUROPEAN SECURITY MAY AT LEAST PARTIALLY HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF THE SED'S CONCERN OVER A REDUCTION IN THE SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE WITHIN ITS BORDERS. AND, AS WE REPORTED REF C, THE GDR AND MOSCOW SEEMED TO BE ON SOMETHING LESS THAN IDENTICAL WAVE LENGTHS ON THE ISSUE DURING HONECKER'S VISIT.

5. WE CANNOT PREDICT HOW THE SED IS REACTING TO THE PROSPECT OF HAVING ALL SOVIET REDUCTIONS IN FORCE IN A POSSIBLE MBFR AGREEMENT TAKE PLACE FROM GDR SOIL. HOWEVER, FROM THE TONE OF EAST GERMAN REMARKS WE HAVE SEEN REFLECTED ON THE ISSUE IN SOVIET SOURCES--AS WELL AS FROM OUR OWN FEELING FOR SED AWARENESS OF ITS ROLE AS THE FOREPOST OF "SOCIALISM" JUTTING INTO WESTERN EUROPE--WE ASSUME THAT ANY OPPOSITION THEY MIGHT OFFER TO SOVIET PLANS FOR MBFR WOULD MOST LIKELY ERR TOWARD CAUTION RATHER THAN GENEROSITY. WE THUS BELIEVE THAT A STICKING POINT COULD BE SED INSISTENCE THAT AT LEAST SOME SOVIET CUTS--PERHAPS EVEN THE BULK OF SOVIET CUTS--BE TAKEN FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND POLAND.

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6551
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6. CONTINUING OUR SPECULATION, HOWEVER, WHATEVER THE STICKING POINT MAY HAVE BEEN, WE BELIEVE IT IS PROBABLE THAT MOSCOW HAS SOMEHOW COME TO TERMS WITH THE SED, FOR WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MOSCOW WOULD EMBARK ON ANY NEW INITIATIVES IN VIENNA WITHOUT HAVING COORDINATED ITS IDEAS WITH THE OTHER DIRECT PARTICIPANT EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES. AND, SINCE WE ARE INCLINED TO INTERPRET KHLESTOV'S "SIGNAL" AS SOMETHING CARRIED OUT UNDER MOSCOW'S INSTRUCTIONS, WE ASSUME THAT THE KEWMLIN BELIEVES THAT EITHER (1) IT HAS SUCCEEDED IN STILLING THE SED'S CONCERNS THROUGH ITS EFFUSIVE GUARANTEES OF THE GDR'S (AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S) "SOCIALIST ACHIEVEMENTS" DURING HONECKER'S VISIT AND IN THE NEW BILATERAL TREATY; OR (2) IT HAS MANAGED TO ALLEVIATE THESE CONCERNS THROUGH ASSURANCES ON THE NATURE OF THE MBFR AGREEMENT; OR (3) SOME COMBINATION OF THESE TWO. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE SOLUTION WOULD BE ASSURANCE THAT ANY REDUCTION IN SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE WOULD BE CARRIED OUT PROPORTIONALLY IN ALL OF THE PACE NGA STATES, AND WOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED TO THE GDR. WE PERHAPS SHOULD NOT COMPLETELY RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GDR REMAINS UNCONVINCED, AND THAT MOSCOW HAS DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH INITIAL EXPLORATIONS

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IN VIENNA, CONFIDENT THAT IT CAN DEAL WITH THE SED OVER THE LONGER TERM; WE NEVERTHELESS THINK THAT THIS IS UNLIKELY.

7. WE THUS SEE KHLESTOV'S RELATIVELY FORTHCOMING PRESENTATION, AS WELL AS HIS STATEMENT THAT HE IS RECOMMENDING THAT MOSCOW "RESPOND POSITIVELY" TO OPTION 111 AS AN INDICATION THAT MOSCOW NOW HAS ITS DUCKS IN LINE TO MOVE FORWARD ONCE OPTION 111 IS ON THE TABLE. HOW EXACTLY IT WILL MOVE OF COURSE REMAINS THE QUESTION OF THE DAY. WE WOULD ONLY ADD TO OUR PREVIOUS REPORTING (REFS B AND 3) THAT THE GDR'S APPARENT OBSTINANCY ON THE ISSUE MAY WELL RESULT IN DETERMINING TO SOME DEGREE THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF ANY POSSIBLE SOVIET REDUCTIONS. IF EAST BERLIN WANTS TO KEEP AS MANY OF ITS SOVIET TROOPS AS IT CAN, THE EASIEST SOLUTION FOR MOSCOW MIGHT INDEED BE TO TAKE THE BULK OF ITS REDUCTIONS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA--WE SUGGESTED BY POLISH EMBASSY

OFFICERS IN WASHINGTON.

8. WE WOULD ADD AS A PARTING COMMENT THAT A RECENT CONVERSATION ON MBFR BETWEEN EMBOFFS AND TWO MFA OFFICERS (NAUMOV, A COUNSELOR, AND BYELOV, A FIRST SECRETARY, BOTH IN THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIVISION) WAS SINGULARLY STERILE, WITH THE SOVIETS EVEN LESS WILLING TO TALK THAN USUAL. EMBOFFS STRESSED AT ONE POINT IN THE CONVERSATION, HOWEVER, THAT NATIONAL CEILINGS WOULD BE PERHAPS THE SINGLE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECT OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR US TO ACCEPT. NAUMOV REPLIED, AFTER SOME THOUGHT, THAT "NEGOTIATIONS ARE NEGOTIATIONS," AND SOME SOLUTION COULD PERHAPS BE FOUND. THIS LITTLE SLIVER, FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, MIGHT INDICATE THAT KHLESTOV'S REMARKS ON A POSSIBLE LOOSENING OF THE NATIONAL CEILING RESTRICTION FOR AT LEAST THE INTERIM FREEZE PROPOSAL MAY INDEED HAVE STEMMED FROM DISCUSSIONS IN MOSCOW. MATLOCK

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